

for ranking number one among public schools in the South. This achievement was recently reported by The Wall Street Journal and deservedly reflects the university's impressive legacy.

Georgia Tech has retained its number one spot for industrial engineering and has recently achieved this top ranking for civil engineering.

Meanwhile, the university's aerospace, biomedical, computer, mechanical, and materials engineering programs all ranked in the top four among all universities nationwide.

Georgia Tech is a leader in advancing research and preparing students for careers in technology and innovation. This is an incredible achievement and a source of pride for Georgians everywhere.

Our public universities are great options for young people to get a quality education, and Georgia Tech embodies this to the fullest.

These well-deserved rankings highlight the commitment of students and staff alike to maintaining a culture of innovation and of excellence.

I congratulate the students, the staff, and the alumni of Georgia Tech.

#### WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS ARE AT RISK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. MANNING) for 5 minutes.

Ms. MANNING. Mr. Speaker, as I rise today, women's basic reproductive freedoms are under relentless attack by rightwing politicians and judges across the country.

Over 2 years ago, Donald Trump's hand-picked MAGA Supreme Court Justices overturned *Roe v. Wade*, dismantling 50 years of judicial precedent.

This catastrophic decision has left one in three women living under outright abortion bans and unleashed a coordinated effort to undermine the full range of reproductive healthcare, including access to birth control.

In his concurring opinion in the *Dobbs* case, Justice Clarence Thomas explicitly called for revisiting the right to contraception. Despite the fact that over 90 percent of women rely on contraception at some point in their lives, extremist Republicans have seized on this as a rallying cry to target birth control.

In Oklahoma, Republican lawmakers have proposed radical legislation to outlaw widely used forms of contraception, including IUDs and the morning-after pill.

In States like Virginia, Arizona, Tennessee, and North Carolina, extremist Republicans have blocked efforts to protect access to contraception.

Adding to this alarming trend, Trump's Project 2025 blueprint outlines a dangerous agenda to further dismantle reproductive healthcare, including targeting emergency contraception and insurance coverage for birth control.

Despite his campaign claims of ignorance about Project 2025, Trump is now staffing his administration with the very architects of this extreme agenda.

I refuse to stand by and let these MAGA extremists interfere with women's private healthcare decisions. That is why I am fighting to pass my Right to Contraception Act to ensure every American has the right to access the full range of FDA-approved birth control.

This legislation is a safeguard against the growing threats to contraceptive rights. It ensures that every American can make crucial decisions about their health, their family planning, and their future.

The Right to Contraception Act guarantees the right to access contraceptive services and protects healthcare providers' ability to deliver them. It also secures access to the full range of contraceptive methods, including birth control pills, IUDs, and emergency contraceptives like Plan B.

In June, I was proud to announce a discharge petition to bring my bill to the House floor for a vote, and I invited my Republican colleagues who claim to support the right to contraception to join me in signing it. All these months later, not a single House Republican has signed that petition.

This comes after 195 House Republicans voted against the right to obtain birth control in the last Congress, and the legislation was blocked by Republicans in the Senate.

To quote award-winning poet and fellow North Carolinian Maya Angelou: "When someone shows you who they are, believe them. . . ."

Time and time again, extremist Republicans have shown us exactly who they are. Their attacks on reproductive rights didn't stop with *Roe*. In fact, they are just getting started.

In contrast, we Democrats believe that every American has the right to decide whether, when, and with whom to have children. No politician or judge should have the power to take that right away.

Republicans purport to believe in small government. Let them start by staying out of our bedrooms and our doctors' offices.

While I may soon be departing Congress because of the outrageous gerrymandering by the Republican-controlled legislature in North Carolina, let me be clear: I will never stop fighting for women to receive the basic reproductive healthcare they need and deserve.

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#### WASHINGTON'S FISCAL INSANITY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MANN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MANN. Mr. Speaker, when I come to this floor, I often speak about how our brightest days are yet to come, about the next generation of

Americans, and about the future we should be working to build for them.

Currently, the Biden administration and Washington's embrace of fiscal insanity is a stumbling block to reaching that future. In November, America's national debt climbed to \$36 trillion.

This is not normal. Washington, D.C., has a spending addiction, and it is just expected that Americans and future generations of Americans will pay for it. Our Nation, our children, our future grandchildren, and our future great-grandchildren cannot afford for us to continue kicking the can down the road.

Last year, the U.S. Census revealed that the median household income was nearly \$80,000. Today, if everyone decided to pitch in and tackle our debt, every American household would need to contribute almost \$273,000 to bring our balance to zero.

Compare that price tag to the average mortgage in the United States, which is about \$245,000. Our national debt 4 years ago was nearly \$28 trillion. Over the course of 1,400 days, the United States accumulated a debt of \$68,352 per second.

No American family could survive that way. Yet, year after year, this is the way our Federal Government acts. This is not sustainable.

If any Member of this body had a loved one who was racking up debt at this rate, none of us would encourage them to mindlessly continue their spending habits. We would do what we could to help them evaluate their spending and get them back on the right track.

Yet, only about half of this body seems to care about how our Federal Government spends our tax dollars. Our fiscal house is in utter disaster, and we need to get serious and start finding solutions.

Since I was sworn into Congress, I have sounded the alarm on our national debt. I have opposed bloated spending packages that only focused on funding far-left wish lists. I fought to reduce and reprioritize our Federal spending. I have challenged this body to think about the blank checks we are writing and ask ourselves: Is there a way to do this more efficiently?

This petition has often been ignored while Washington sticks to business as normal and spends, spends, spends. Enough is enough. This is not fiscal responsibility. This is fiscal insanity.

On November 5, 2024, America made it clear that we no longer want business as usual in this town. It is time to get our fiscal house in order and to get our country back on track.

As America approaches its 250th birthday, President-elect Trump was spot-on in creating the Department of Government Efficiency as a perfect gift to our Nation and to the next generation of Americans.

Mr. President, hear me loud and clear: We will work with you to make our government work for the people again, to make it efficient again, and

to clean up our fiscal house. Let's work together to end the Federal Government's out-of-control spending once and for all.

This challenge is not going to be easy, but America is worth it. The future of our country is worth it. The next generation of Americans is worth it.

I know that we can do it. We are going to have to do it together, and our brightest days truly are yet to come.

#### UNITED STATES SUPPORT FOR AFRICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of strengthening United States' relationships with Africa and the Caribbean.

The history and culture of the United States is inextricably linked to Africa and the Caribbean. The brutal history of colonialism, slavery, and the middle passage has shaped our shared destinies.

As people of African descent in the Americas and Africans on the continent, we commemorate all of our tragedies and triumphs of the last four centuries. We know that there is strength and comfort in celebrating our shared Black ancestry and identity.

These vital historic ties are an opportunity for the United States. As I travel in Africa and the Caribbean, I hear from many people, business leaders, and government leaders. They are actively seeking to partner with the United States. They specifically want to work with Americans to tackle global challenges that impact us all. Yet, Washington too often ignores or cannot hear these voices. We fail to invest the time, resources, and energy into building true partnerships.

We have entered a new era of global competition. Governments like those of China and Russia openly seek to be the partner of choice. There is a void, thanks to our neglect, that they are filling.

People in Africa and the Caribbean want to work with America as the partner of choice. If their partner of choice is not listening to them as sovereign countries, they will make decisions on their bilateral and multilateral alliances which exclude those countries which have all but ignored them.

America needs to step up our game if we want to build the true and deep partnerships that will advance our shared goals.

In these countries, respect, development assistance, trade, and investments go a long way. For example, in 2005, Hurricane Dennis devastated the Caribbean, causing billions of dollars in damage. I worked very hard to get a small amount of reconstruction assistance, which was \$40 million, for Grenada. When I visited Grenada later,

there were signs everywhere for the first time that read: Thank you, USA.

It is also important that Members of Congress get out and visit African and Caribbean countries. China shows up, believe me, every day in Africa and the Caribbean. Members of the United States Congress need to show up.

I remember once, when I visited Grenada just a couple of years ago, I stopped by the United States State Department Office there. I saw a picture on the wall of myself, the former chair of the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee, Congressman Eliot Engel, and several Members of Congress from a codel when we visited Grenada in 2007.

I asked if that codel had made an impact, and I was told, in fact, that 2007 was the last time there had been a congressional delegation to Grenada. That is outrageous.

I believe that this work can and should be bipartisan. Two decades ago, I worked with George Bush to designate June as the Caribbean American Heritage Month. Today, that commemoration is still celebrated among people in the Caribbean and Caribbean Americans here in the United States. It is a useful tool for building bridges with our Caribbean neighbors.

I am proud that, during my term leading the House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, I have worked substantially to increase American investment and partnerships with Africa and the Caribbean.

As the chair of the Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs, I managed to increase the development assistance account by more than \$800 million. We were able to invest that increase in important priorities, like Prosper America, to grow jobs and incomes in Africa and the United States; Power Africa, which seeks to connect 60 million Africans to reliable electricity; and the United States African Development Foundation, which invests directly in African entrepreneurship and the Young African Leaders Initiative, which seeks to lift up and strengthen the brightest flowers of African youth.

In the Caribbean, I created a program to invest in inclusive economic growth for the first time and worked with the State Department to expand our Caribbean diplomatic presence. One of our embassies in Barbados is responsible for seven countries. They don't even have a plane. They can't travel to those seven countries they are responsible for, so we are expanding our presence there.

We expanded support for small-island states coping with sea-level rise and invested in the Caribbean Base and Security Initiative to tackle transnational security challenges, like crime and drug trafficking.

Mr. Speaker, these investments are crucial, not only to support American security and interests, but to build an

equitable and inclusive world which we seek.

I urge my colleagues to listen carefully to African and Caribbean voices. We have millions of people of African descent in our own country. We have to continue to build these bridges toward a shared just and prosperous future for all people.

#### FEDERAL HIGHWAY SAFETY STANDARDS ARE NOT OPTIONAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. LOPEZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LOPEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address an issue that affects all of us deeply: the safety of our roads and the lives of those who travel on them.

Each year, preventable tragedies unfold on our highways. Families are shattered, lives are cut short, and dreams are lost. This is not because of chance, but because, somewhere along the way, safety standards were neglected, corners were cut, and human lives were undervalued.

This isn't just about statistics or regulations. It is about people: fathers, mothers, daughters, sons, friends, and neighbors. These are people who trust the system in place to protect them, such as the Federal highway safety standards, which exist for one purpose: to save lives.

These guidelines are not arbitrary. They are the result of decades of research, real-world testing, and collaboration among safety experts, engineers, and policymakers. We know what works to prevent accidents, protect construction zones, and keep our roads safe. Yet, in Colorado, time and time again, we see these safeguards disregarded, with devastating consequences.

Think about the mother driving home from her nightshift who never made it to her kids because her car was rear-ended in an improperly managed construction zone. Think about the newlyweds, full of hope and plans for the future, killed when a semi overturned due to inadequate lane shifts and insufficient traffic controls.

These are not just accidents. They are preventable failures to prioritize safety, to honor the trust of those who use our roads, and to follow the very standards designed to prevent these tragedies.

Federal highway safety standards are not optional. They are essential safeguards meant to ensure that every person who steps onto a highway has the best chance of getting to where they are going alive and uninjured. Cutting corners on these standards isn't just irresponsible, but it is unacceptable. Every poorly designed lane shift, every missing warning sign, every unfunded safety measure represents a choice to put cost or convenience above human life.

The Colorado Department of Transportation has a responsibility and a moral and professional duty to follow